

# Book Reviews



***Scales on War: The Future of America's Military at Risk***  
By MG (Retired) Bob Scales  
Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016, 248 pages

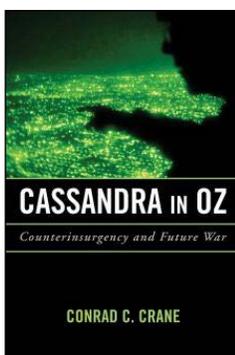
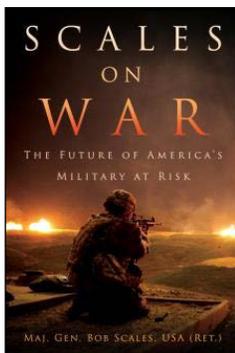
***Cassandra in Oz: Counterinsurgency and Future War***  
By Conrad Crane  
Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016, 328 pages

Reviewed by LTC (Retired)  
Rick Baillergeon

For many years, Bob Scales and Conrad Crane have thought critically about matters pertaining to the U.S. military. They have analyzed the past and offered feasible recommendations regarding the near and far term future of the military. Along the way, they have dissected many aspects of the military including organization, strategy, leadership, and warfighting. Each have clearly established sterling reputations in and outside the military and in particular within the U.S. Army. These reputations will continue to grow as each has recently crafted volumes which are excellent.

Before I address the commonality between the two volumes, let me discuss the scope of each. The Scales volume is entitled *Scales on War: The Future of America's Military at Risk*. He utilizes the volume to provide readers with more than 20 chapter essays. These are a body of work the author has written in the past and they explore an assortment of topics. These include areas such as the draft, women in the Infantry, adaptive enemies, and forecasting the future of war. Readers will find many of these chapters extremely thought provoking and all are clearly relevant.

As the title alludes, Scales has crafted a book which does not paint an optimistic picture for the future of the U.S. military, Army, and the Infantry. Throughout the volume, he emphasizes two reasons, tied to one another, which he believes have chiefly contributed to this. First, the United States has an affinity for technology and that attraction has led senior leaders (both military and civilian) to believe technology alone is the answer to fight wars. Second, because of this reliance on technology, the importance of the Soldier — particularly the Infantryman — has dramatically diminished. As the author states in his concluding paragraph, "When the infantry loses its edge, America loses its ability to win its wars. And, very



sadly, that day is just around the corner."

While the Scales volume touches many areas, Conrad Crane has written a book which is a bit more focused and personal. Within *Cassandra in Oz: Counterinsurgency and Future War*, he keys on the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In particular, he focuses on the development and subsequent implementation of Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency*, during the wars. Crane is clearly well qualified to address the subject since he served as editor and lead author for the doctrinal manual.

In his discussion, Crane addresses numerous topics related to the manual. The author initially discusses why the manual was developed and then the interesting process which took ideas to doctrine. Once Crane completes this, he then keys on the implementation of the doctrine in the field. Readers will find he does not sugarcoat his thoughts on how the manual was applied (or in many cases, not applied) in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Although the volumes vary in overall scope, they share several superb characteristics. First, both Scales and Crane write in very conversant styles. It is a style which is perfect in assisting authors in achieving their objectives. Additionally, the style makes these volumes extremely readable and engaging.

Second, both authors offer recommendations regarding the future of the military. In the case of Scales, he provides these throughout the volume. As highlighted earlier, the author is emphatic that the U.S. must make changes now in several areas or face perhaps catastrophic consequences. For those familiar with Scales' books, you are well-aware that he does not simply state a problem without providing a possible solution. This is true once again in *Scales on War*.

Crane is a bit more traditional in how he organizes his recommendations. He utilizes his final chapter, "Final Musings," to share his thoughts and observations on the future. As expected, the author addresses numerous subjects tied to counterinsurgency. However, he also delves into a wide variety of other areas. These include conflict termination, targeting, special operations, cyber, media, and military and Army reorganization. In total, Crane has crafted a superb conclusion for readers.

Finally, Scales and Crane have crafted books which invite readers to think. This is achieved primarily because of the two characteristics addressed above — readability and author thoughts/observations. The conversant writing styles and the provocative subject material are tailor-made for debate. Readers may not agree with everything Scales and Crane recommend or opine. However, in those cases, readers

are likely to develop their own solutions to the problems the authors examine.

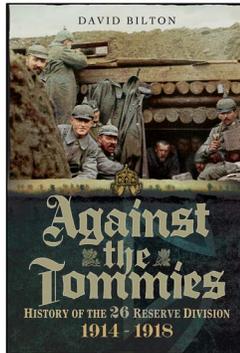
In conclusion, these volumes are extremely engaging, highly relevant, and incredibly thought provoking. Each of these books is a valuable read. However, I believe they truly complement one another. Consequently, I recommend carving out some extra time and reading them together. Once you have completed them both, you will have a far better perspective of the recent past and present of our military. Additionally, you will be enticed to think critically regarding the future of the military and in particular, the U.S. Army.

***Against the Tommies: History of the 26 Reserve Division, 1914-1918***

**By David Bilton**

**Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2016, 176 pages**

Reviewed by Maj Timothy Heck,  
USMC Reserve



With *Against the Tommies*, David Bilton edited and republished *Die 26. Reserve-Division im Weltkrieg 1914-1918*, a

German unit history originally published by the staff officers of the 26th (Württemberg) Reserve Division in 1920. The book is divided into a preface and two parts (1914-1916 and 1917-1918). As Bilton notes in the preface, the German army was under far fewer censorship restrictions than the Allies. As a result, “this permitted the production of accounts... that reflect what the German soldier saw and experienced, warts and all, in every theatre.” Some were published during the war while others, like the original text, were published after the war, drawing extensively on primary material. Due to the German’s relative lack of censorship, *Against the Tommies* contains a wide breadth of images capturing the daily existence on the Western Front for the men of the 26th Reserve Division through the war.

The photos contained in *Against the Tommies* are chronologically organized. As a result, similar images appear in both sections, allowing readers to see the evolution in equipment, the battlefield, and the men. The photos present life both in the trenches and in the rear. While a disproportionate number are of the division staff, the common soldier and NCO are readily prevalent. The enlisted soldiers are rarely named except for decorated patrol or squad leaders. Just as impressive are the photos documenting the increasing destruction of towns like Miraumont and Thiepval.

The book’s primary shortcoming is its lack of analysis. Bilton remarks in the preface that “the narrative is a mixture of translation... reduction and addition.” Given that there are only 12 pages of text and a bibliography consisting of two sources (neither of which is *Die 26. Reserve-Division im Weltkrieg 1914-1918*), it is hard to identify what is added. While the book is not designed to be a full history of the unit’s battles, it was surprising to see the entirety of the Somme Offensive, where the division fought against “at least six English (sic) divisions,” given only three paragraphs. The Battle of Arras only has two paragraphs, neither of which delve into the role of the division as an Eingreifdivision (counter-attack division) or how German tactics had changed by 1917.

There were multiple missed opportunities to expand the original text and provide a fuller understanding of the actions, men, and equipment of the 26th Reserve Division. As an example, Part One begins with a brief sentence saying 26th Reserve Division has an active component sister division but does not explain the parallel nature of the German Army nor the nature of reserve service in pre-war Germany. Such an explanation would help flesh out the context the men of the 26th Reserve Division encountered at war’s outbreak.

Bilton has opened up the visual history of 26th Reserve Division to an English-language audience with *Against the Tommies*. For those looking for more understanding of the men in the photos, it would be illuminating to read books like Peter Doyle and Robin Schäfer’s *Fritz and Tommy: Across the Barbed Wire* that explains the circumstances behind the images.

**Have you read a book lately that you think would be of interest to the Infantry community and want to submit a review? Or are you interested in being a book reviewer for *INFANTRY*?**

**Send us an email at:**

**[usarmy.benning.tradoc.mbx.infantry-magazine@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.benning.tradoc.mbx.infantry-magazine@mail.mil)**

**or call (706) 545-2350.**